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TUESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ President of Cyprus addresses General Assembly. Foreign Ministers of Italy, Soviet Union, Tunisia, Ghana, Peru, Japan and Czechoslovakia also speak in continuing general debate.

+ Security Council decides to institute air embargo against Iraq and Kuwait; Secretary-General addresses meeting, which is held at Foreign Minister level.

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Opening the General Assembly's main debate today, George Vassiliou, President of Cyprus, said his country, a small State and "victim of military aggression" by a larger neighbour, Turkey, strongly condemned the Iraqi invasion and occupation of Kuwait.

On the crisis in his own country, the President said that his Government would continue to promote contact and co-operation and persevere with proposals for the complete demilitarization of Cyprus. Cyprus would continue to afford the Secretary-General its full support and co-operation in his efforts to achieve a breakthrough, by way of result-oriented negotiations.

Regarding the issue of the environment, the responsibility for repairing the damage to the earth rested with those primarily responsible for causing it -- the developed countries, Mr. Vassiliou said. He added that all countries must eschew development policies that depleted natural resources. He proposed the establishment of a global fund for the environment.

Foreign Minister Gianni de Michelis of Italy, for the European Community, focused on the Gulf crisis. He said that the Iraqi claim that the time had come for Baghdad to erase borders that had been drawn artificially to divide up the Arab nation, and that the other Gulf States, such as Qatar, had no historical legitimacy, posed a challenge that must not go unanswered. Stressing the importance of a strict embargo and the maintenance of a collective response, he said that neither timidity, ambiguity nor economic shortages must be allowed to open a breach in the resolve of the international community. The West, and first and foremost the Community, was ready to

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shoulder its part of the burden so that the embargo did not fail. The Community intended to speed up the application of the Co-operation Agreement and the negotiations of free trade with the Gulf States. It would contribute air-traffic-control support to an air embargo if the Security Council so decided.

Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze of the Soviet Union called for the criteria of defence sufficiency to be defined, and said the world community should monitor the military power of States, arms supplies and transfers of military technology. It should keep a close watch on countries that made determined efforts to build up their offensive capabilities and have them explain why, and the United Nations must play the primary role in that effort, with support from regional security structures. He proposed introducing global and regional registration of certain types of armaments, and he called for agreement on principles governing the sale and supply of arms. The Conference on Disarmament must be asked to submit recommendations on that issue to the next session of the Assembly.

He said the Security Council must have the means to enforce its decisions and, if necessary, to suppress aggression, and have a mechanism for preparing and co-ordinating such actions. It should begin by taking steps to reactivate the work of the Military Staff Committee.

He also proposed that the Security Council set up an expert group to consider ways to deal with "unconventional situations" arising from the mass taking of hostages and cases of blackmail involving particularly dangerous and destructive weapons. The Council might establish a rapid response force, to be formed on a contract basis from units specially designated by different countries, he said.

He also called for establishment of an international machinery, perhaps on a temporary basis for now, under the auspices of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) or the World Bank, to mitigate the negative consequences of the Gulf crisis for countries in a particularly vulnerable position.

Habib Boulares, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Tunisia, said his country was deeply concerned over the crisis in the Gulf. Tunisia had engaged tireless efforts to resolve the crisis thanks to the special relationship between it and Iraq and Kuwait. Despite the difficulties and the complexity of inter-Arab relations, Tunisia believed that a solution to the crisis would be found within a strictly Arab context.

He said his Government had sent special envoys to the parties to the conflict, especially to permanent members of the Security Council, the Secretary-General and to the leaders of the Arab community which could form the framework of a solution, based on international law.

If the Gulf crisis was a breach of legality, it was not unprecedented, he continued. A most striking example of injustice was that done to the Palestinian people, whose legitimate right to self-determination and to an independent state on its own soil was poorly understood. Meanwhile, Israel

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had continued to refuse to withdraw from the occupied Arab territories. United Nations resolutions should be applied fairly and with equal firmness.

Obed Y. Asamoah, Secretary for Foreign Affairs of Ghana, on the crisis in the Gulf said that the willingness by the Western countries to rush into action at the annexation of Kuwait contrasted sharply with the condoning of, and inaction over, Israel's occupation of Arab lands and the benign neglect of Liberia. A great dilemma was posed to many third world countries having to withstand high oil prices as a result of a prolonged sanctions policy against Iraq.

He appealed to the international community to support Ghana and five other member countries of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) that sent peace-keeping troops to Liberia to stop the carnage and the destruction of property in that country.

On developments in South Africa, he said that until there was clear evidence of an irreversible move for dismantling apartheid, the international community should continue to maintain comprehensive and mandatory sanctions against Pretoria.

Speaking for Peru, Minister for Foreign Affairs Luis Marchand Stens said the international economy continued "unable to bridge the gaps of its disparities". The developing countries continued to face a radical and increasing marginalization and to be passive actors in the macro-economic international policy jointly formulated among industrialized economies.

Illegal drug trafficking, Mr. Stens continued, was a phenomenon that affected vast majorities in all regions of the world and Peru was one of the countries most affected by illicit production. He said his country was fully committed to intensifying the struggle to eradicate it, but strategies were required in order to foresee crop substitution and a drastic decrease of consumption.

Taro Nakayama, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan, told the Assembly that the recent changes in Europe were spreading to other regions of the world. In the Asia-Pacific region they included improvements in Sino-Soviet and in Korean-Soviet relations, the start of the Soviet withdrawal from Mongolia and Cam Ranh Bay, and the process of democratization in Mongolia.

A comprehensive political settlement in which the United Nations was involved was essential to any lasting solution to the long-festering Cambodian problem, Mr. Nakayama stated. Japan was considering how it might extend co-operation with United Nations peace-keeping activities there, and once peace was attained, national rehabilitation efforts.

Japan hoped also to contribute to the creation of a climate conducive to further dialogue between North and South Korea.

Czechoslovakia's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Jiri Dienstbier, speaking about the changes in Central and Eastern Europe,

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said it was a special honour for him to be welcomed into the community of nations as the first Foreign Minister of newly liberated Czechoslovakia.

His country's interest in building a united Europe determined also its stand on the unification of Germany. Czechoslovakia considered the forming of a single Germany as an act of implementation of the German people's right to self-determination and a prerequisite for a definitive overcoming of the division of Europe and for the settlement of the outstanding issues that had been left over from the Second World War.

Also addressing the Assembly today were Foreign Ministers of Bolivia, Algeria, Denmark and Kenya.

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The Security Council this afternoon decided to institute an air embargo against Iraq and Kuwait.

Presided over by Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze, the Council took that action by adopting resolution 670 (1990) by a recorded vote of 14 in favour, to 1 against (Cuba), with no abstentions.

By the resolution, the Council decided that all countries should deny permission to any aircraft to take off from their territory if the aircraft was carrying any cargo to or from Iraq or Kuwait other than food in humanitarian circumstances, or supplies intended strictly for medical purposes or solely for the United Nations Iran-Iraq Military Observer Group (UNIIMOG).

The Council also decided that all States should deny permission to overfly their territory to any aircraft destined to land in Iraq or Kuwait unless it had been inspected to ensure it had no cargo on board which was in violation of resolution 661, or unless the particular flight had been approved by the Sanctions Committee or had been certified by the United Nations as being solely for the purposes of UNIIMOG.

The Council further called on all countries to detain any ships of Iraqi registry which entered their ports and which were being or had been used in violation of resolution 661, or to deny such ships entrance to their ports except in circumstances recognized under international law as necessary to safeguard human life.

To guarantee compliance with the resolution 670 and resolution 661, the Council decided to consider measures directed at States which evade the provisions of those resolutions.

In a statement before the Council, Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar said that during the weeks since the 2 August invasion, the Security Council had found itself shouldering the heavy responsibility which the Charter had placed on it but which, in earlier circumstances, it was unable to

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